

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 09249 301410Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 IO-14 NEAE-00 /057 W
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P 301300 DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9411
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

UNCLAS TUNIS 9249

PARIS FOR LABATT

E.O.11652: NA
TAGS: ELAB PFOR TS
SUBJ: BACK TO THE MINES

REF: (A) TUNIS 9175, (B) TUNIS 9179, (C) TUNIS 9248

1. GOT'S OFFICE OF MINES AND MINERS FEDERATION
REACHED AGREEMENT LATE TUESDAY, DEC 29, WHICH EFFECTIVELY
CANCELLED THE THREATENED STRIKE THAT THE TUNISIAN
GENERAL WORKERS CONFEDERATION (UGTT) HAD CALLED FOR
MIDNIGHT FRIDAY, DEC 30. THE ACCORD CALLED FOR SALARY
REVISIONS, ONE HUNDRED PERCENT NIGHT BONUS, AN INCREASE
IN PAID VACATION DAYS, AND UPGRADING FRESH WATER SUPPLIES
TO THE MINING CAMPS. THE AUTHORITIES ESTIMATED THE TOTAL
IMPACT OF THIS AGREEMENT WILL COST \$2.5 MILLION (EQUIVALENT).
REMAINING DEMANDS (YEAR-END BONUS, PROFIT SHARING,
HOUSING ALLOWANCE) WILL BE BARGAINED FOR IN APRIL 1978
"DURING THE ANNUAL ROUND OF COST-OF-LIVING NEGOTIATIONS
WHICH ARE TO TAKE PLACE UNDER THE TERMS OF THE JANUARY
1977 SOCIAL PACT.
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2. COMMENT: THE MINERS' STRIKE AS WELL AS THE PROJECTED
RAILROAD WORKERS' STRIKE HAVE FUNCTIONED PRIMARILY AS
"CARRIER-WAVES" FOR HABIB ACHOUR'S AND THE UGTT'S ONGOING
CONFLICT WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF
WORKERS' ECONOMIC AND WORKING CONDITION GRIEVANCES HAVE

DEFINITELY TRAVELED AS SECOND-CLASS FREIGHT. IN THIS
CONTEXT, THE MINERS' GAIN MAY BE, IN A SENSE, THE UGTT
LEADERSHIP'S LOSS. BY THROWING BREAD AT THE MINERS,
THE GOVERNMENT -- FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST -- DEPRIVED
THE UGTT OF ITS CIRCUS.

3. WHILE IT WOULD OVERSIMPLIFY AND DISTORT THE
ISSUE
TO DESCRIBE THIS SETTLEMENT AS A "CAVE-IN" BY EITHER SIDE,
THE GOVERNMENT DOES APPEAR TO BE THE WINNER OF THIS
ROUND IN ITS FIGHT WITH ACGOUR AND THE UGTT. ALTHOUGH
THE GOVERNMENT DID MAKE SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS
TO THE MINERS (WHICH IT WELL MAY HAVE PLANNED TO MAKE
IN ANY CASE), THE MINERS' UNION WON ONLY TWENTY PERCENT
OF ITS ORIGINAL ECONOMIC PACKAGE. THE UGTT--ONCE AGAIN
AT THE MIDNIGHT HOUR-- BACKED AWAY FROM THE THE CHASM, AS IT
HAD STATED IT WOULD NEVER DO UNTIL ALL OF THE MINERS'
DEMANDS WERE ACCEPTED.
MULCAHY

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NNN

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*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

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